

be regarded as in a degree the subject of *education*, it was his lot to have the principles of religion exhibited and inculcated in a repulsive language and cast of thought by the seniors of his family or acquaintance. In that case, the unavoidable frequency of intercourse must have rendered the counteractive operation of the unpleasing circumstances, associated with Christian truth, almost incessant. And it would naturally become continually stronger. For each repetition of that which offended his refined mental habits, would incite him to value and cherish them the more, and to cultivate them according to a standard still more foreign from all congeniality with his instructors. These habits he began and continued to acquire from books of elegant sentiment or philosophical speculation, which he read in disregard of the advice, perhaps, to occupy himself much more with works specifically religious. To such literary employment and amusement he has again and again returned, with a delightful rebound from systematic common-places, whether delivered in private or in public instruction; and has felt the full contrast between the force, lustre, and mental richness, brightening and animating the moral speculations or poetical visions of genius, and the manner in which the truths of the gospel had been conveyed. He was not serious and honest enough to make, when in retirement, any deliberate trial of abstracting these truths from the vehicle and combination in which they were thus unhappily set forth, and in a measure disguised, in order to see what they would appear in a better form. This change of form he was competent to effect, or if he was not, he had but a very small portion of that mental superiority, of which he was congratulating himself that his disgusts were an evidence. But his sense of the duty of doing this was perhaps less cogent, from his perceiving that the evangelical doctrines were inculcated by his relations with no less deficiency of the means of proving them true, than of rendering them interesting; and he could easily discern that his instructors had received the articles of their faith implicitly from a class of teachers, or the standard creed of a religious community, without even perhaps a subsequent exercise of reasoning to confirm what they had thus adopted. They believed these articles through the habit of hearing them, and maintained them by the habit of believing them. The recoil of his feelings, ^{tb} before, did not alarm